



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



HEROES AMONG US

For the past year, in honor of the 125th anniversary of South Dakota's statehood, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has been recognizing "heroes among us." Heroes who have made, and continue to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

Most of the recognitions were of veterans throughout this state, but during the past few weeks we have been highlighting the partners who work toward enhancing the lives of South Dakota's veterans and their families.

"We are fortunate to have an outstanding team at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs that shares their expertise, passion, commitment and dedication with us," said SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman. "Their achievements are a source of pride and inspiration. The caliber of their work is exceptional and has a major impact in our securing benefits for our veterans."

"Thank you for the inspiration you bring to this team and thank you for your exceptional work," said Zimmerman.

The Department and their partners expanded their work load this year by joining together to reach out to South Dakota's 75,000 veterans via the Operation RAV campaign. 2015 will unveil the success of this campaign.



SDDVA SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN

"Warmest thanks for all of your hard work and outstanding contributions as a member of the SDDVA team. I appreciate all your dedication to ensure our success in enhancing the lives of our veterans."

Inside this issue:

State Veterans Home Update	2
Code Talker Memorial Discussions	3
Brown named State VSO	3
Upcoming Events	4

Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota
veterans.



MJFSVH PROVIDES MONTHLY VIP TOURS

Monthly, the staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs provide tours of the new home that is being constructed. Tours are open to community leaders, elected officials, residents and veterans.

The tour allows staff to showcase the progress that is being made. Last week Hot Springs Mayor Donnell and Hot Springs City Council members were among the guests on the tour.

We encourage you to follow the construction progress on our webcam —

[http://
www.truelook.com/
clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/](http://www.truelook.com/clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/).

Looks like Santa will have a nice long runway to land the sleigh on next year!!!!!!



CODE TALKERS MEMORIAL DISCUSSIONS BEGIN

State officials, tribal veterans service officers, and others met recently to talk about the a vision to erect a memorial to honor South Dakota's code talkers.

The term "code talkers" refers to those Native Americans who used their tribal languages as a means of secret communication during wartime. Many of these code talkers learned that their lan-



guages could be their most important weapons. "Their stories and their service are an inspiration to all Americans and deserved to be memorialized," said SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman. "Their communications skills and expertise helped the army move troops and supplies without the enemy knowing."

A working committee will continue to study this issue and prepare

drafts of the memorial and messages to be contained within the memorial.

BROWN NAMED NEW SDDVA STATE VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Erin Brown, currently serving as SDDVA claims examiner, has been selected as the new State Veterans Service Officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. Brown will begin her duties in this new role December 24, 2014.

Brown came to the Department in August of 2014. Prior to that she served as a county veterans service officer in Stearns County Minnesota.

Brown fills the position that was held by Regina Boeve.



Upcoming Events

2015

Jan. 5—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Jan. 13—Governor's State of the State Address—Pierre—1:00 pm
Jan. 27—Aberdeen Stand Down—Bethany Lutheran Church—1620 Milwaukee Ave SE—1:00—6:00 pm
Jan. 29—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Breakfast
Feb. 2—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre
Feb. 3—American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8 Legion Cabin—Pierre
Feb. 6—Women Veterans Wellness Retreat—DAV—Sioux Falls
Feb. 6-8—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Watertown
Feb. 21—Lee Greenwood Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Pavilion
Apr. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

May this Joyous Season bring you peace, health,
and happiness throughout the coming year!



The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the South Dakota Department of Military will be closed December 25 and 26 and January 1.



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

